Homeless At Home: The Communication Effects of the *One Homeless Night*

Program on Participants' Attitudes and Perceptions of Homelessness in

Canada

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Abstract

Experiential learning provides an opportunity for participants to engage with their respective subject matter in an interactive, effective way. *One Homeless Night*, an experiential learning event, communicates the nature, causes, and complexity of homelessness through a street walk, facilitated orientation, interactions with the homeless, a service learning component, and finally, an overnight experience at an organization that works with the homeless. This study endeavored to ascertain the extent to which *One Homeless Night* is effective in the communication of the true nature of homelessness to participants. Key findings of *One Homeless Night* included increased understanding of the complexity of homelessness, increased empathy with the homeless, and a greater understanding of the causes and challenges of homelessness. The final purpose of this study was to research effective education on homelessness and to contribute to policy-making that supports credible work with the homeless.

Key Terms: Homeless, One Homeless Night, experiential learning, education, social-justice, attitude change, perceptions, homelessness, Canada, United States.

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Introduction

Homelessness is a complex and diverse phenomenon. The face of
homelessness changes from country to country, as does its definition.
According to Hombs (2001), a homeless individual:

> (1) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and (2)
> has a primary nighttime residence that is (a) a supervised, publicly or
> privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living
> accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and
> transitional housing for the mentally ill), (b) an institution that
> provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be
> institutionalized, and (c) a public or private place not designed for, or
> ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human
> beings. (Hombs, 2001, p. 4)

While a significant amount of research about the nature, causes, and
characteristics of homelessness has been conducted, research gaps still
prevail. One of the reasons is the difficulty in defining homelessness and
tracking the homeless, as they are a transient population (The Community
Social Planning Council of Toronto, 2003). In an attempt to clarify the
parameters of homelessness for this study, a few key definitions were
referenced. Further clarification of the definition of homelessness emerged
in an invited Paper to the United Nations, where Statistics Canada (2004)
reviewed definitions of homelessness stating that there are "two components

and levels of homelessness: the *absolute* homeless and the *relative*

homeless" (p. 2). Absolute homelessness pertains to having no roof over

one's head, however temporary. Relative homelessness by, some definitions,

includes shelters, sub-standard and dangerous housing, and staying on

friends' couches or in other temporary places such as cars. Golden,

Greaves, Latimer & Currie (1999) defined homeless individuals as "those

who are absolutely, periodically, or temporarily without shelter, as well as

those who are at substantial risk of being in the street in the immediate

future" (p. I). From street corners and friends' couches, to shelters and

alleyways, the homeless are everywhere and many of them are hidden to the

world.

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how

Canadians perceive homelessness. Through participation in *One Homeless*

Night, an experiential learning event, this study endeavored to explore what

participants have learned about homelessness. While literature was

reviewed from the United States, Canada, and in part from the U.K., the

event itself occurred in Canada. Therefore, frequent references concerning

Canadian sources emerged. However, this does not limit the event's

potential to Canada, however. Many of the principles and best practices can

easily be transferable across the United States.

Various and complex factors lead to the brokenness people often face

before they end up homeless. Also, many are considered to be "hidden

homeless" and as many as 80% of homeless individuals do not necessarily

live on the streets but rather on peoples' couches, in spare rooms, and in

cars (Raising the Roof, 2007).

The estimated number of homeless people in Toronto is 25,000 and

these demographics include children, adults, and seniors. Over the past 9

years, more than 170,000 individuals utilized shelters in Toronto (Golden et

al., 1999). Research over this amount of time is rare, and according to

Golden et al., only two cities in the United States, New York and

Philadelphia, have the ability to provide the longitudinal data this report

offers (Golden et al., 1999). The Golden et al. review of the data and her

observation of the gap in data illustrated the need for longitudinal data

regarding homelessness. Of the data that does exist, valuable insights

emerge.

While men make up the majority of shelter users in Toronto, 5,300

were found to be children. In the homeless population, greater incidences of

addictions and mental illnesses prevail. The fastest growing groups using

shelters are youth and families. Many perceive shelter use to be chronic and

permanent, while in contrast, one quarter of shelter users remain in the

shelter only for emergencies. Golden et al. noted that "the chronic homeless

population represents a small percentage of the total homeless population

but uses a disproportionate share of the resources" (Golden et al., 1999, p.

8). The translation of this statement means that 46 percent of the resources

are being used by 17 percent of the population (p. 8). In addition, over

80,000 people in Toronto are at risk of homelessness.

One group particularly vulnerable to homelessness is refugees. In Toronto, more than 10,000 refugees arrive annually. Over 50 percent of these are non-sponsored refugee claimants, pleading asylum upon arrival in Toronto and receiving no assistance (Golden et al., 1999, p. 10).

While these demographics of homelessness provide insight into the extent of the problem, seeking understanding of the causes of homelessness is also crucial. Many stereotypes and prejudices exist regarding what causes individuals to become homelessness and what lasting, appropriate, and effective solutions exist. Understanding the complexity of homelessness is essential along with effective strategies to help the homeless.

Understanding Homelessness

In June 1976, Habitat I, the first United Nations sponsored conference on human settlements, was held in Vancouver, B.C. The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements and the creation of the U.N. Center for Human Settlements, a specialized United Nations agency devoted to housing concerns, emerged. In October 1989, *Housing Now* was formally launched. *Housing Now* endeavors to reduce homelessness and provide affordable housing for the homeless (Hombs, 2001). Many initiatives to deal with homelessness have emerged. Since then, however, the success of such initiatives rests on the sponsors' level of understanding of the true nature of homelessness. A continued focus on the true nature of homelessness provides a basis for understanding its complexity and working toward effective solutions.

Public initiatives to combat the problem often fall short. A study conducted in Toronto in 1998 showed that homelessness is getting worse, not better, and the newest group increasingly facing homelessness is families with children. Along with the changing demographics, admissions to Toronto shelters increased by 75 percent between 1988 and 1998. Much of the promised Canadian governmental initiatives to make available affordable housing and land did not happen (Report Card, 2000). As a result, when many people see homeless individuals, they perceive that despite the billions of dollars poured into homelessness initiatives, job training, housing projects, addictions programs, and treatment centers, the question remains whether much impact and success have emerged.

Yet, individuals who work directly with the homeless know that change is possible; however, it often requires long-term interpersonal investment in homeless individuals. Outlining the need for comprehensive work, Hombs (2001) noted the importance of housing and income as key solutions; however, he also emphasized that public support, care, and treatment for mental health as well as substance abuse were factors to consider. This diversity of needed support extends to care for children and those in prison. He stressed that we no longer should view the homeless as people who just had a bad break in life. While homelessness is an old phenomenon, they recognize that the magnitude and scope of the problem, what the true effects are, and the responses of individuals to the problem. The nature of homelessness is often misunderstood as the public does not

have an opportunity to explore its complexity. Other often overlooked factors are the practices leading to the successful transition of homeless individuals out of homelessness.

A complex list of factors affects homeless individuals. According to Golden (2000), the primary reasons why individuals become homeless are sexual, physical, and mental abuse that many face in their own homes, causing pain that drives them to the streets. In addition, housing and other systemic problems along with mental illness, job loss, injury, and other specific factors cause homelessness (Golden et al., 1999). Additional social factors contributing to homelessness include: income, employment levels, the availability and cost of housing, fiscal and monetary policies, interest rates, tax policies, and social policies regarding welfare benefits and people with disabilities (Hombs, 2001).

Generalizing about the causes of homelessness can lead to a lack of understanding of the situation. Conley (1996) stressed the importance of avoiding generalizations when trying to understand why a homeless person has difficulty transitioning from homelessness. Many have difficult relationships with landlords and cannot necessarily access resources given to them even if they are available. Conley (1996) noted "the more we learn about the street homeless, the more we come to see that the popular stereotype of a shiftless 'bum' is an inaccurate way to describe the majority of individuals who make up this population" (p. 25). One effective way to

learn about the true nature of homelessness is to study the best practices of those who work directly with the homeless.

A pilot focus group study conducted in March 2006 by the author of this study with front line street workers from across Canada inquired about the key communication strategies utilized when working with homeless individuals. A frontline street worker is a person who works in a position that allows for direct contact with homeless individuals on a regular basis. Examples of this type of role include outreach workers, shelter front desk staff, program staff, caseworkers, social workers, cooks, trained college students, and trained volunteers. Key strategies discovered in the focus group included the use of physical touch, hugs, proxemics, and generally nurturing behavior. These aspects proved crucial to successful relationship building in communicating with homeless individuals. Touch is often overlooked, but has an extremely positive impact on homeless individuals. Listening and proxemics are critical to effective communication with homeless individuals as well. They are often ignored as equals. The frontline workers also noted that respecting personal boundaries and needs for safety and security are important in the uncertainty of homelessness. The role of words and helping individuals to feel valued, loved, and cared for was an objective shared by all the frontline workers in the focus group. In addition, the results stressed the importance of honesty and openness in communication with homeless individuals. These key communication strategies were utilized to help homeless individuals transition from

homelessness into relative and appropriate levels of housing and employment, and to develop life-skills (Neff, 2006).

The importance of the March 2006 pilot study was to recognize the extensive knowledge of frontline workers and the need to document best practices. These best practices can be incorporated into programs to reduce homelessness. The communication strategies employed by frontline workers is invaluable for individuals interested in learning how to work with the homeless. Sharing of this knowledge is also an opportunity for frontline workers to educate the community. These experiences build rapport and connections between full time organizations working with homelessness and its volunteers and supporters. These frontline workers comprise the majority of the individuals who worked to facilitate *One Homeless Night* programs across Canada.

For individuals and organizations involved in credible work with homeless individuals and who also understand the complexity of homelessness, it is vital to have the community's support. The opportunity for these organizations to be able to effectively help homeless individuals often lies in donations of both time and money by doctors, dentists, churches, and schools. By educating community members regarding homelessness, a better understanding will emerge with more collaboration and less negative reactions toward homeless individuals stemming from stereotypes and prejudice. Their expertise drove the content of *One Homeless Night.* Ultimately, a deeper understanding of homelessness in the

community can lead to a strong financial donor base for the organizations and partnerships, increased volunteerism, and changes in social awareness through trickle-down effects. This will, in turn, contribute to diffusion of innovation of knowledge and best practices. The combination of a deeper understanding of homelessness, its complexity, solutions and parameters, along with a strong relationship with a local organization will provide a strong foundation for ongoing awareness, participation and partnerships between participants, organizations, and those who work with the homeless.

Education on Homelessness

 Education of the public regarding homelessness in Canada occurs in many forms and is carried out by many organizations. Primarily, the review of literature on education focuses on Canada since *One Homeless Night* occurred there. There is limited data on group participation in an experiential learning event designed to educate an audience about homelessness. To date, little is known about the experiential learning about homelessness that takes place through evangelical Christian organizations. In studying group participation in an awareness event through evangelical Christian organizations, an even greater research gap exists in Canada. This specific gap includes the study of these organizations and their facilitation of this type of experiential learning event.

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of an educational event, *One Homeless Night,* through the use of surveys and interviews. The study endeavored to measure the extent to which attitudes

and perceptions regarding homelessness were altered through participation in this experiential learning event called *One Homeless Night*. The event was offered across Canada in October 2005 and October, November, and early December 2006.

One Homeless Night is a program sponsored and developed conceptually by Crossroads Christian Communications Inc. The event provides an opportunity for individuals to play the role of a homeless person for a night by participating in a street walk, staying overnight in a temporary shelter, and actively interacting with homeless individuals. In addition, video-recorded interviews with homeless or formerly homeless individuals are viewed by participants to provide a contextual look into the nature and causes of homelessness. Those interested in attending the event partner with local organizations who work with the homeless.

The participating groups in this study were comprised of youth, adults, university students, and some families. Some groups had one adult chaperone for every three youths. Other groups consisted mostly of adults.

One Homeless Night is an event designed to serve two purposes. Primarily, it is an educational event. The secondary purpose is to raise needed funds for local organizations and their work with the homeless. First, in order to educate the public, the itinerary, facilitation principles, and teaching concepts are carefully created in direct partnership with staff from the various organizations, incorporating their best practices, materials, and years of educational experience. Participants are given a guided and

carefully researched route to walk prior to the brief tour, and to see the streets at night. In the introduction, prior to walking the streets, a video component is utilized, which allows participants to see some more obscure places where homeless individuals reside. Due to the intrusive nature of observing homeless individuals' housing, clips depicting where the homeless stay are designed to provide a context for the walk. In addition, interviews with formerly homeless or currently homeless individuals are reviewed with participants on video. After the walk outside, which typically lasts 2 ½ -3 hours, the group returns to the host location, typically an organization working with the homeless. Groups participate in a debriefing after the walk to process what they saw with what they feel and think. This allows the participants to begin to examine their views on the homeless with a credible facilitator who can explain the truth behind common misconceptions. A service component in the evening is tailored to the specific location and is planned at the discretion of the facilitator. Examples of service-components are: cleaning, cooking, sorting donated goods, and spending time with the homeless in a meal or drop-in environment. After sleeping at the organization (usually on the floor), the groups eat breakfast or return home depending on the services provided by the organization.

      The second purpose of *One Homeless Night* is to raise funds to support the operating costs of sponsoring organizations. A disproportionate percentage of evangelical Christian organizations, compared with other charitable other organizations working with the homeless, operate solely on

donations. These organizations are usually excluded from receiving government funding because of religious affiliations. The minimum fee to participate in *One Homeless Night* is $25, but many groups raise considerably more by asking for donations and talking about homelessness with peers, friends, family members, and colleagues. These donations are directed to fund the organization with which the group participated.

This form of experiential learning is commonly referred to as role-playing. It is a powerful tool in impacting individuals in their personal learning and growth. Rice, Roberto, and Yacanelli (1981) outlined the positive personal impact on a group that participates in young adult events which involved time in the community. The focus is on increasing awareness of those around them, their needs, and how they can help. They stressed the importance of community, outreach, and this type of experience. The outreach allows students to feel a sense of community, belonging, and inclusion. *One Homeless Night* follows this model by emphasizing transfer of knowledge, explanations of homelessness, root causes, and how people might get involved.

Specifically, experiential education often focuses on educating people on social justice issues. "The incorporation of service and justice focused on the education of young people on social issues of the world, caring about others, and acting to alleviate injustices. The emphasis primarily was on helping young people serve others" (Rice et al., 1981, p. ii). This objective is shared by and implemented in *One Homeless Night.*

Chapter Two

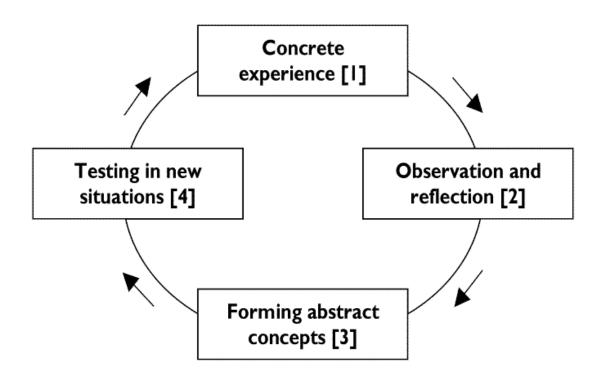*Literature Review*

Experiential Learning

Beginning with Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model, experiential

learning has been cited as an effective way for people to learn and retain

what they have learned. Experiential Learning Theory has served as the

basis for effective education and learning that is engaged, processed, and

applied. This is intended to supplement a concept that is heard with an

opportunity to learn in a much deeper, more applicable way. Experiential

learning is a process whereby a person experiences an event, begins to

process the experience and gains understanding in new areas from the

experience (Kolb, 1984). Rezak (1999) confirmed the power of a process

whereby experience and thought unite. According to Kolb (1984), "the

experiential learning model pursues a framework for examining and

strengthening the critical linkages among education, work, and personal

development" (p. 4). Learners are able to form new significance through

common experiences and conversation. They go through a process of

dialectics, and according to the experiential learning model, this includes

apprehension and comprehension. The apprehension occurs in the concrete

experience and the comprehension occurs in the abstract conceptualization

(Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2005).

Experiential learning explains contradictions between opposite ways

of understanding and processing the world. If a person is presented with

opposing views of homelessness, this conflict allows for the process to begin.

When these are resolved, learning takes place. "Learning is the process

whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.

Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and

transforming it" (Kolb, 1984, p. 42). A combination of understanding a

concept and transformation of it are necessary for learning to occur (Kolb,

1984).

Figure 1.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Model.

Experience itself, as described by Lash (2006), has had many

definitions over time. Primarily, it relates to experience in both the mind and

the senses. Boyatzis, Kolb, & Boyatis, Kolb, and Mainemelis (2000) provided

a summary of research on experiential learning. Students, in particular,

have even more opportunities to learn through experiential learning while they are in school and are often open to new experiences.

In the United States, the model of experiential learning has been around since the beginning of the twentieth century and has its foundation in the work of Dewey (1940) as well as the cooperative education movement. Experiential learning continues to grow in popularity. Elmer (2004) estimated that 82% of 324 major universities and colleges across the United States offer more than 7,000 graduate level courses that are taught using such pedagogies (p. 12).

Baker et al. (2005) examined various elements of conversation as it pertains to experiential learning, and outlined how talking allows the learner to process and determine his/her understanding through reflection on conversations. During this process the five dialectics (apprehension and comprehension; reflection and action; epistemological discourse and ontological recourse; individuality and relationality; status and solidarity) were developed. They described conversational learning to be grounded in Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and a process that allows learners to adopt new ideologies and learn in a collective experience by having conversations. In the case of the homeless, this applies to both conversations with the homeless as well as conversations with other participants, sorting through what they have learned. ELT is based on the work of James, Freire, Lewin and Piajet who studied experiential learning. The basis for ELT, Kolb's original model (1984), encompasses an

understanding of how people learn and process information. There is an expansion of modern research across academic fields recognizing that meaning can be drawn from conversation. These fields include information systems, management, psychology, organizational behavior, and sociology (Baker et al., 2005, p. 413).

A notable difference exists between dialogue and conversation. In its origins, conversation is meant to embody a more communal experience, time with others and shared space, whereas dialogue can often refer to debate or working to increase one's understanding of facts about something, a much more information-oriented approach. Conversations that allow participants to inquire about new information can provide a chance to learn and grow in their appreciation of community. Conversation can serve as a tool to allow people to interact and sort through their thinking on various issues: "The dialectic process can open up a conversational space where opposing ideas can be explored, resolved, or embraced through conversation" (Baker et al., 2005, p. 416). Apprehension and comprehension are concrete and abstract forms of knowledge. Concrete knowledge is known as apprehension and abstract knowing is known as comprehension. Baker et al. (2005) indicated that "all concepts derive their validity from connection to sense experience" (p. 417). A conversational learning environment is defined by the poles of the dialectics. Considering the dialectics helps to understand the parameters within which a conversation occurs.

In addition, Baker, Johnson, and Kolb (1997) cited the imperative element of debriefing in an experiential learning event:

> The importance of the debriefing as a part of the overall educational process is pivotal in transforming experience into learning. The ways that space and time are created for participants' reflection and sharing of experience through conversations in debriefing sessions can make a critical difference between having experience and learning from it. (p. 1)

Classic elements of experiential learning have new additions, such as integrated learning. Kolb, Boyatis and Mainemelis (2000) noted the newest direction for ELT. Integrated learning allows a participant to experience, think, act and reflect all in one process that is based on the learning environment.

As the developer of the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI), Kolb (2000), found it possible to place people into four main categories of learning: *assimilating, diverging, converging*, and *accommodating* (Kolb et al., 2000). All of these learning styles benefit from a real-life learning experience of a concept. In particular, the accommodating learning style benefits primarily from "hands-on experience" (p. 6). In their analysis from 1971-1999, Kolb et al. (2000) found that over 990 studies have been conducted that are often interdisciplinary in nature. A review and summary of these studies produced a 61.7 percent support for the effectiveness of experiential learning.

Learning through simulations, a form of experiential learning is increasing in popularity. Hertel and Millis (2002) noted that the popularity of simulations has grown in many places, but particularly in higher education, where it is continuing to build the case for its effectiveness. The model focuses on the goals of "a transfer of knowledge, skill development, and the application of both knowledge and skills" (p. 14). When in the simulated experience, students are able to learn from a broad knowledge specific to their respective discipline. One unique quality that simulations include is a communication of the entire process of students' respective areas of study.

Simulations, like experiential learning, are utilized in many instructional settings and include medical internships, law enforcement, simulated space travel, military enactments, and laboratory experiments, among others. Essentially, these areas and others are able to simulate real life experiences as close to reality as possible. Many participants in experiential learning projects come from a variety of backgrounds. Some are working professionals, seeking to transfer their knowledge into a professional setting, but also apply it to all they do. The use of simulations has been in place for over 40 years, especially by educators. It is important to note that no specific, agreed upon definition of educational simulations exists, however an acceptable definition has been offered by Hertel and Mills (2002). They defined educational simulations as "sequential decision-making classroom events in which students fulfill assigned roles to manage

discipline-specific tasks within an environment that models reality according to guidelines provided by the instructor" (p. 14).

Service Learning

Often associated with experiential learning, service learning does have similarities in the application of classroom concepts or concepts in general to real life situations. Service learning applies concepts, through practical experience and application, that have a direct relation to the learning objective. Another term under the umbrella of experiential learning is service learning. Service learning is occasionally linked to social advocacy, internships, volunteerism, and citizenship training where the term service learning is preferred (Karlberg, 2005). The increase of service learning spread to college campuses and by the 1960s was a popular term. Experiential learning and service learning have often been used interchangeably. For the purpose of this study, primarily, the term experiential learning will be used; however, *One Homeless Night* will be named an "experiential learning event." Service learning should be understood to be just as transferable and applicable.

Furco (2001) stated that the basis for service learning has roots in theories of both experiential education and constructivism. Quantanilla and Wahl (2005) indicated that the there is a current re-emergence of service learning on college campuses and that there were more than 167 different definitions found to describe service learning. It is significant to note the variety in definitions as it presents a case for varied, but credible work. One

common component of service learning is for students to engage in the community. In the academic environment, Quantanilla and Wahl (2005) found that students who participated in service learning had better retention of information, increased understanding of theories, and higher grades. In the context of designing a service learning project for a specific course in a school, it is imperative that the organization supported, as well as the project, match very closely with the curriculum of the course and its content. For the service learning to be most appropriate, the skill level of students must be considered.

There have been many effective variations of service learning over the years. Tolman (1994) described a service learning component for her students in which they acted as participant-observer in a practical project as part of the course. She taught a course in interpersonal communication, and as part of the requirement, it was mandatory to apply what they learned in their communication course by visiting local organizations and volunteering for at least 15 hours. Students adopted the role of participant-observer and took field notes on their experience. Tolman (1994) observed that the experience should not only incorporate giving to others, but also a receiving component. Students took field notes, observed while in the community, and used story-telling in a small group environment to reflect on the experiences. Their need to apply what they learned in the service learning environment provided additional insight and the conversations

processing the experience provided depth for the experience and learning process.

Karlberg (2005) proposed that service learning should focus on fostering a *service ethic* rather than just serving. The goal ultimately would be to foster a true ethic of care for the well-being of others that does not focus on the individual learning. He recognized inherent values in American culture and warned that the "American Dream" is much more focused on affluence than depending on others. He argued that a service ethic or attitudes of helping others is imperative to improve the quality of life in the United States (Karlberg, 2005, p. 19). A large number of corporate internships are considered to be service learning and a deviation from their original purpose of service learning often occurs as students have been found to expect the school to prepare them for "lucrative careers" and use the service learning experience as career preparation (p. 20).

Closer to the original value of service learning, community service learning provides opportunities for students to learn how to research, but more importantly to grow as citizens. Koulish (1998) noted that after learning how to research and gain knowledge, students were able to learn how to solve problems, lead, build team, and learn as they worked with immigrants. Immigrants are often temporarily homeless as well as marginalized and can be a particularly fragile population. He suggested using the Kilpatrick Method, a model that is "centered around multi-faceted, real-world problems, as opposed to compartmentalized subject matter"

(Koulish, 1998, p. 562). This method seeks to focus on relevant problems for students to work on rather than a one dimensional problem. This allows for effective learning that is as close to reality as possible and that incorporates *all* facets of what is learned.

Koulish (1998) argued that the classroom has strayed away from real-life examples in a concept-based system, and that this does not suffice to create citizens. Community service learning allows for active, contributing citizens that are focused on helping in the community. Overall, the traditional education system has allowed students to learn concepts, record the information, and hear a professor share what he/she knows, but does not allow for practical or active application to life, and as a result creates a disconnect for citizenship.

Service learning often brings together volunteers, such as students, with a community service organization. Judge (2006) noted that this provides a mutually beneficial situation for both parties. One way to observe dynamic learning is through the Project Method. Waks (1997) outlined how the Project Method functions, some of the previous objections to it, and its current presence in many work, as well as educational, environments. Project-based work is common and can be defined as "the ability to be self-starting, self-directing, and self-pacing within the context of work teams" (Waks, 1997, p. 405).

Anderson and Sungur (1999) found that service learning is "an active learning experience associated with a community service application" (p.

132). In their study, they showed how statistics students applied their learning to community-based projects benefiting students, teachers, and the community organization. Among the benefits of this type of service learning is the encouragement of ongoing involvement between the students and the organization they help. They also emphasized that students are able to develop an inquiry-based approach, allowing them to seek answers to their questions in real life situations. Also, students saw the real life application of their work to their area of study.

A combination of relevant service with high quality learning comprise the formula that is ideal for successful service learning. However, Stemen (2003) found that service organizations often keep service activities simple. Projects that are able to incorporate service learning in a more complex manner are difficult to find.

Kezar and Rhoads (2001) outlined the dilemma often faced in higher education and questioned whether service learning has a role to play in higher education. The dilemma is that service learning is important, but often difficult to effectively implement. They also examined the responsibility of higher education, to not only recognize but implement service learning with a goal to teach citizenship. The goal of this lies in the desire to educate students practically so they have a sense of citizenship, not simply for academic or career goals. Some benefits for students' participation in service learning are as follows:

Developing the habit of critical reflection; deepening comprehension of

course content; integrating theory with practice; increasing

understanding of the complex causes of social problems;

strengthening one's sense of social responsibility; enhancing

cognitive, personal, and spiritual development; heightening

understanding of human difference and commonality; and sharpening

abilities to solve problems creatively and to work collaboratively.

(Jacoby, 1999, p. 20)

Opportunities for students to learn through service learning exist and

the increased recognition of the importance of service learning has allowed

schools to examine its incorporation into their education programs (Jacoby,

1999). Students receive a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction from

community involvement that transfers into a life-long desire to help and be

involved as citizens (Rhoads, 1998).

Both service learning and experiential learning are increasingly

becoming respected and effective forms of teaching, including at high

academic levels. "Credibility is one of the common denominators of success

at influencing others" (Hogan, 2005, p. 57), and when facilitators have

credibility, they have made the first step toward reaching someone. As

reflection on an experience increases, the experience itself begins to grow in

importance to the participant and also in positive outcomes. Experiential

education respects the individual and recognizes the importance of human

development:

It applies the learnings of human development. . . it depends on the

will of the learner to learn . . . is personal-goal oriented. It depends on

the will of the learner to learn, on his readiness to learn, and on his

willingness to apply the learning . . . Experiential education always

deals with living issues. The leader aims to make the learning relevant

for the learner. (Rice, Roberto, & Yaconelli, 1981, p. iii-iv)

The relevance, learning, and experience all combined result in an

opportunity for participants to effectively process what they are learning and

also what can be done to social problems, such as homelessness.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive Dissonance Theory (CDT) provides a useful framework for

examining the contradictions that students sometimes experience when

theory is tested against reality as they are participating in service learning

and experiential learning. Festinger (1957) outlined cognitions, or pieces of

knowledge, which humans are constantly processing. Many cognitions are

interacting and occurring simultaneously; however, the majority are

unrelated. Some that are related and also conflicting are considered to be in

cognitive dissonance, which can be understood as the psychological conflict

between two cognitions about the same thing. This results in the need for a

person to resolve the cognitive dissonance. They can add cognitions, change

cognitions, or alter their importance. If two cognitions are significantly

conflicting, the addition of another cognition can reduce the degree of

dissonance. If two cognitions disagree, another option is to alter one

cognition to agree with the other. Finally, alteration of the importance of one or more cognitions helps to prioritize the importance of one over the other.

Understanding the various degrees of dissonance can provide a context for these alterations. When an individual is experiencing dissonance, the severity of the dissonance is impacted by the increased inconsistency between cognitions. Dissonance also increases with an increased number of conflicting cognitions. The importance that the individual holds for discrepant cognitions can be adjusted by the individual. Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) described the incongruence between our beliefs and behavior, which causes a tension that needs to be resolved. This resolution occurs with either an alteration of beliefs or behavior, producing a change. When faced with a homeless person, one might not truly believe that he/she is homeless due to legitimate aspects such as mental illness, abuse, addictions, etc. If an experiential learning situation teaches the individual that this is possible, allowing them to see that there are complex factors leading to homelessness, and many innocent victims of homelessness, an alteration of beliefs or behavior becomes necessary. If the credibility of the person hosting the event is high, this causes a higher likelihood for the individual to want to alter his or her beliefs and or behavior. Both may be altered and with respect to cognitive dissonance theory, on altered beliefs.

Experiential Learning and Homelessness

As noted above, experiential learning has increasingly been incorporated into educational courses. In one experiential learning example, Elizabeth Marx, a student in Spokane Washington, was instructed to interview people to find out about the situation of homeless people in Spokane. She noted the awkward feeling at the beginning of the interview with a homeless woman, but she noticed a personal change after a while realizing she had caused most of the problem. Diversity of culture, race, and economic status, among other factors, can cause discomfort.

The professor who set up the assignment held debriefings for the students to help them process what they hear when he brings a friend from a different background to speak to the class. Many respond in anger to the challenging situation and the information they learn, but when the professor allows the students to write out their feelings towards the marginalized group and perceptions begin to change.

The importance of community service and social awareness applies to many fields which are related to homelessness. For example, Peace and Justice Studies Programs exist at the University of San Francisco and these programs teach tolerance toward the homeless. A study showed that upon completion of courses on homelessness, poverty and the students made significant contributions to the community service organization that they worked with and the organizations had a mutual benefit of gaining from the expertise of the students. There was evidence that the students recovered an

ongoing value and appreciation for social justice as well as a desire to help over the long-term (Roschelle, Turpin & Elias, 2000).

Beamer (1998) noticed his students were not comprehending the concepts about homelessness he taught to the depth he desired, despite attempts to be concise and creative. He proposed an experiential learning project for political science students that involved working with housing and the homeless. The students worked at Greyston Bakeries, which employed formerly homeless individuals, and where profits supported the Greyston Inn, housing low-income families. Students combined working in the bakery, child care, and gardening with sessions with staff at Greyston to learn about what led to homelessness and "the participant observation conferred validity on the interventions conducted by Greyston—facilitating understanding of causality, of which variables mattered, and of how policies interacted for different individuals and families" (p. 558). Students agreed that to mix concepts with implementation allow them to see how various policies affected the homeless, helped immensely.

Service learning, as it differs from community service, has a connection not only to the community and involvement, but also to academics and the program of study. Jacoby (1999), who worked with a service learning program with the homeless stated that "although service learning often is specifically tied to classroom-related community service in which concrete learning objectives exist, some writers suggest that student involvement in community service may be tied to out-of-class learning

objectives and thus constitute a form of service learning as well" (p. 279).

Increased understanding of self and others were factors Jacoby (1999) used

to decipher whether students were learning citizenship through the

experience of service learning. The desire was to see if the "caring-self" was

developed through the experience, based on an existence of these themes (p.

286). Students saw the experience as a chance to look beyond themselves

and see others' situations and also to understand the statistics through

personal interactions with the homeless. One student noted, "my

understanding of homeless people was based on what I'd seen on the news,

in magazines, or on TV shows. They were not real people and I could easily

turn my back on them and the problem in general" (Jacoby, 1999, p. 286).

Students noted the drive to help was stronger after connecting names with

faces and working directly with homeless people. They found that their

stereotypes and generalizations were challenged by the experience as well.

These opportunities include medical students, who work with the

homeless in service learning (Fournier, 1999). They can volunteer in the

areas of their study and can grow in this type of application of their

expertise. The homeless need much more medical care than others and are

in need of practical assistance.

Beaman (1988) found that volunteer service was service learning in

her classroom. The students were instructed to seek any non-profit

organization, like a shelter or one working with the homeless, to go and

volunteer for a few hours per week. Overall, the value added was imperative

for the students. Over 93 percent had never volunteered prior to the

experience.

Studies in experiential learning have mostly been conducted in

traditional educational settings and only occasionally in learning

environments involving homeless individuals. However, Day (2002) found

that students participating in a forum theatre project, interacting with those

who were homeless and/or refugees, and working in a collaborative learning

environment experienced an accepting surrounding. This surrounding was

that of a positive, safe place where students and refugees could interact. Her

study was conducted in the UK and the forum theatre project was acted out

by those who had been homeless, allowing students a real opportunity to

engage in moral behavior with them. The students cited it has an effective

experience. This was an atmosphere that embraced diversity and the

marginalized. For participants, this forum theatre environment enhanced

emotional intelligence and produced empathy toward the issues of

homelessness. Experiential learning with an emphasis on social justice

issues such as homelessness provides a platform for social awareness in an

experiential learning environment.

Public Perceptions of Poverty and Homelessness

Perceptions about poverty and homelessness are often related.

Americans have been found to have ideological inconsistencies in their

beliefs about poverty. Nilson (1981) found that poverty was an abstract

concept unrelated to Americans personally. As a result she found that

Americans could "ignore or tolerate cognitive inconsistency about [poverty]" (Nilson, 1981, p. 546). She noted that in the mid-sixties and mid-seventies concern for the poor was higher, but decreased when the general population experienced economic hardships in the late seventies. In social networks, if supporting the poor was reinforced, this contributed to increased awareness about poverty. Age, religious conservativism, and certain ethnic backgrounds were found to be factors that increased support of poverty while education was a factor that led to a drop in support of poverty (Nilson, 1981, p. 546).

Furnham (1996) suggested that lay theories explaining the causes of poverty and the causes of homelessness are related. He found theories of the causes of poverty in disciplines such as political science, economics, psychology, and sociology. Attitudes towards welfare were linked to attitudes toward the causes and solutions to poverty. In addition, conservative voters placed higher importance on individualistic causes of poverty, those focusing on the responsibility or blame of the poor. Liberal voters tended to find explanations in society for poverty. Globally, the worldview of a person affected his or her view of the causes of poverty. A belief in a strong work ethic often led to blaming of the poor, stating they lacked motivation. Furnham (1996) argued that if ideologies about work ethic could be changed, so would perceptions of homelessness. He also reviewed more recent studies indicating that structural forces led to homelessness more than individualistic factors in the United States.

Furnham (1996) noted that there are implications for those who desired to create educational approaches for social change. He noted further that the program designers need to carefully consider the cognitive and social framework of those who have chosen to help and also those being helped, and this will decide whether it is successful or whether it fails.

Females and younger respondents considered homelessness to be a more serious problem and were also found to be the most supportive of structural strategies for reducing homelessness. They had high levels of sympathy toward the homeless and did not blame the homeless directly for their problems, but rather economic factors. Furnham's (1996) research confirmed that a lack of consistency in ideology is lacking among Americans who are supportive of certain aspects of both the individualistic and structural frameworks for interpreting the problem of poverty and homeless. This produces an attitude that neither blames the poor individual nor the institutions. It assumes that the poor will take advantage of the opportunities presented to them.

Poverty is far enough removed and often irrelevant to most Americans that they fail to commit to one side or the other and are able to accept conflicting ideas in their thinking. Part of the problem in understanding the homeless is the sometimes limited connection individuals have with the homeless on a regular basis. Nilson (1981) argued that the higher the status of the group, and the wealthier they were, the more likely they were to

support individualistic beliefs about poverty. The wealthy groups were those that placed the onus on individuals for their situation.

Studies on the effects of education have revealed little about its impact on these perceptions because the factors surrounding them are too varied. Link et al. (1995) found that the public has been supportive of increased funding to help the homeless and that this has been a consistent finding. The median across 23 studies indicated that over 60 percent of people were willing to pay more in annual taxes to help the homeless. Values that Link et al. (1995) researched, such as a "willingness to help personally," showed specifically that 81 of people were willing to pay $25 a year or more in taxes. A fairly significant majority were willing to pay $100. He also reported that many of the public favored federal funding to support the homeless.

In addition to supportive friendly individuals, emotional responsiveness was high at 86 percent, whereby respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Link et al. (1995) felt compassion or sadness when they considered a homeless person (p. 545). Despite these emotional sentiments, the public was still limited in its ability to empathize with the homeless. Thirty nine percent of respondents had difficulty understanding how someone becomes homeless. Sixty-two percent of respondents had no ability to comprehend what the homeless do with their time. Over 55 percent indicated that they believed that the homeless could be identified by their appearance alone. Over 72 percent of people cited irresponsible behavior

and 64 percent laziness as the reason the homeless are in their particular situation. When asked how many homeless adults out of 100 had been in jail or prison, the average estimate was 45.

This research also indicated that the public wanted to restrict panhandling or setting up temporary shelters in public places. Furthermore, extensive contact with the homeless was not found to be a factor in contributing to compassion fatigue. In fact, the more frequent or rich the respondents' interaction with the homeless, the greater willingness they had to help. Another finding indicated that those with the greatest exposure to the homeless did not support initiatives that were based on a lack of empathy for the homeless (Link et al., 1995, p. 548).

In conclusion, Link et al. (1995) found strong evidence to support the idea that the public is concerned about homelessness, does not see it as desirable and that there are many ideas of what the best solutions are. Link et al. argued that policy makers have a strong opportunity to create policy that is both effective and in line with public opinion.

Using attribution theory to explain people's causal judgments, Begin, Guimond, and Palmer (1989) reviewed a number of studies of how people explain social events related to poverty, homelessness, and unemployment. They cited three main causes as perceived by the public. First, individualistic causes, placing all onus on the poor. The second cause placed blame on economic, external and social factors, called societal causes. Finally they cited "fatalistic causes" placing responsibility on fate or

luck (Begin et al., 1989, p. 127). Age had an impact on peoples' perceptions

of the homeless. As respondents aged, internal factors were more often cited

as causes for homelessness. Institutions such as universities generally play

a significant role in impacting beliefs. People learned ways of interpreting

events based on the environment around them and their professional

training. Life experiences of each individual shaped the truth they believed.

What a person studied also had an impact on the degree to which he/she

blamed a homeless individual for his/her situation. Socialization was

named to have the greatest impact on social groups. "The socialization

process can be regarded as prescribing a 'code of cognitive conduct'" (Begin

et al., 1989, p. 135).

In a national survey of 1,453 individuals that inquired about their

attitudes towards the homeless, Phelan, Stueve, and Moore (1995) looked at

respondents' "support for economic aid," "tolerance," and "support for civil

liberties" (p. 133). Well-educated respondents were significantly less

supportive of economic aid for homeless people. In the case of graduate

school, the faculty were found to be more liberal than undergraduate

faculty. Liberal described their values towards social, economic and political

issues. Phelan et al. argued that numerous studies *do* confirm that higher

levels of education predict more liberal or social attitudes such as tolerance.

However, Phelan et al also acknowledged that explanations for this are

controversial as it is difficult to quantify what constitutes liberal and

conservative and particularly what affects this. Professors have an impact

on student learning and education can often lead to more liberal attitudes.

Those who attend graduate school may adopt more liberal attitudes because

the faculty are more liberal in their views, and additional time is spent in a

liberal environment. Liberal compared to completing undergraduate degrees

only.

Media and its Influence on Perceptions of Homelessness

Another factor that may influence the public's understanding of

homelessness is the media. Media reports feature the homeless; however,

the accuracy of what is being reported varies. Link et al. (1995) surveyed

1,507 people on perceptions towards the homeless and compared it with

U.S. census data from 1990. The research found that the media portrayed

the public as losing patience with the homeless, that they have "compassion

fatigue". The survey data indicated, however, that there was no evidence

that a compassion fatigue existed as a result of increased exposure to the

homeless or homelessness. Tompsett, Toro, Guzicki, Manrique, and Zatikia

(2006) argued that the media has the power to frame social issues and

influences perceptions by "creating an illusion of popular consensus that

leads individuals to reassess their personal views" (p. 48).

Shield (2001), who compiled a comprehensive analysis of nightly news

coverage over a 14-year period, found a variation in coverage that was more

closely linked to the season rather than the current plight of the homeless.

For example, when news coverage in the 1980s focused on the homeless

"crisis," people were found to accept the shelters and soup kitchens as

solutions to the problem. Campbell and Reeves (1989) reviewed the story of Joyce Brown, who was institutionalized by New York against her will and how the media portrayed her, as well as how they portrayed the homeless. Brown first became famous when the city of New York in 1987 and 1988 placed her in psychiatric care against her will. Three network news stations aired her story and a special 60 Minutes piece aired as well. The controversy in her situation was the debate over whether it is okay to place a homeless person in psychiatric care against their will. All three news networks primarily focused the central problem of homelessness to madness or insanity.

The print media were said by Campbell and Reeves (1989) to have featured the homeless beginning in the 1980s, but then featured them with greater emphasis thereafter. From 1981, when two articles were featured, to 1985, when 235 appeared, the coverage steadily increased.

Terminology is another tool used in the media to depict the homeless. "Vagrant" was a term used by the media to describe the homeless. From that time forward, greater emphasis and attention were directed towards the homeless, and vagrant is no longer used. Caldwell (1999) outlined Project Consecha Nuestra, whereby he interviewed, filmed and photographed a small migrant worker community in California. He recommended that people look at all aspects of the production process to understand media's impact and also to embrace user knowledge, not just technology. This

meant understanding the impact of filming, producing, directing etc., not just the produced piece.

One commonly missed area is that of media produced by the homeless themselves. Torck (2001) analyzed four street newspapers published by the homeless in the United States and Europe. There has been a degree of framing even within this platform that is intended to give homeless people a voice. Often stereotypes were reinforced, and in the case of Europe, the true voice of the homeless was limited. In the United States, the platform has had more success and the newspapers are often written by former homeless individuals.

Hombs (2001) noted that in the past, many people observed news of the homeless in the media during the winter and the holidays. However, after some time, many began to encounter the homeless in their commute to work. It is no longer uncommon to see the homeless everywhere, panhandling, walking with their possessions, or holding a sign. Media coverage has declined and only occasional features of the homeless or benefit fundraisers for the homeless appear (Hombs, 2001). If the general public is less conscious toward homelessness, does this impact the overall social awareness or consideration of the plight of the homeless?

Reducing Homelessness

The reduction of homelessness in peoples' awareness may lead to a decreased desire to help them. Regardless of what the media portray, many additional factors that contribute to homelessness are often overlooked.

Homeless people suffer from unemployment. Marginalized groups, such as

the Aboriginal community in North America, have higher percentages of

homeless among their population and many have trouble accessing support

to find income The result is that they are unemployed and in many cases,

have not completed high school.

Wigert, and Ristock (2003) addressed the need for prevention of

homelessness in terms of at-risk children in schools. They posed the

questions of how communities can best support at-risk youth as a

preventative measure in the process of managing homelessness.

In Ontario, Bill 8 was introduced, also called Ontario's Safe Street Act.

The goal of this bill, like many legislative or policy initiatives, was to help

with homelessness. In theory, it was enacted to give more power to law

enforcement in making activities of aggression (like squeegee workers)

illegal. Squeegee workers clean peoples' windshields for money at stop

lights. An analysis of its function to distribute power in roles and public

policy was conducted (Gingrich, 2002). A lobbying effort by the Evangelical

Fellowship of Canada strived to lobby the government on issues pertaining

to the rights and care of the homeless. The Golden Report is an example of

well documented and researched recommendations that have failed to be

implemented by the government.

Much research about homelessness has been carried out in the

United States and, with caution, can be applied to homelessness in Canada

as well as other western countries. Barron (2005), of the *Journal of Housing*

and Community and Development, described the success of a support system tailored to the individual needs of four men who became displaced in California. This case study exemplifies an organization that helped find affordable and practical funding. This was carried out with the support of the parents of the four men and the support of their community. A financing plan was formed in order for the four mentally challenged men to work along with their parents and the community workers. The active, accurate support was key to their success, not simply the provision of housing. One aspect of helping the homeless reflected in a study conducted by Swigart and Kolb (2004) are the factors that the homeless themselves report as being influential in whether or not they rejected a public health disease-detection program.

O'Connor (2004), in her overview of U.K. and U.S policies, found similarities in the approaches in the U.S. and Britain that incorporated prevention, multi-organizational approaches, and working with the individuals. The comparison acknowledged the complexities of housing homeless people and their need for support. Over time they have each differed in their offerings of housing and support along with health care. The article outlined the constant need for funding to sustain the necessary support. Both countries are outlined as poised to implement effective policies, testing, and monitoring for these ideas (O'Connell, 2004).

Goetz and Schmiege (1996) acknowledged that unemployment and lack of access to social services are the often ignored root-causes of

homelessness in North America. Homeless people can be perceived as lazy, addicted, and mentally ill. These negative perceptions are common in the United States and Canada. People who are on welfare and trying to work do not successfully transition from their work through removal of the funds and training programs. Goetz and Schmeige (1996) cite two reasons for this. First, the training was not sufficient compared to what is taught in school or on the job. Second, the training did not prepare individuals for jobs that pay enough to support themselves (Goetz and Schmeige, 1996).

The Homeless Employment and Related Training project (HEART) was successful and this project worked to provide industry level skills and training combined with high-involvement management of each case. The success of HEART had to do with the intensive support that was combined with skills training. Homelessness is complex problem and Goetz and Schmiege discuss the variety of support factors needed to help the homeless, including housing assistance, skills training, transportation, health care, counseling, substance abuse treatment, life skills training, and case management. The HEART project is an example of successful work with the homeless. Many projects go undocumented and this is a need among projects working with the homeless.

In order to support the development of effective measures to prevent and reduce homelessness, print and electronic documents relating homelessness to education, employment, and income support were reviewed. The result of the review indicates that there is very little

documented Canadian research in this domain. (Review of Canadian

Literature on Homelessness, 2003, p.1)

Something widely agreed upon regarding the homeless is that

"homelessness is both affected by and affects education, employment, and

income support, as well as related topics such as health and addictions"

(Review of Canadian Literature on Homelessness, 2003, p. 1). That is to say

that homelessness is complex and varied and it impacts all facets of a

person's life.

With some certainty, what can be said of the homeless in Canada,

based on the literature, is that the homeless struggle to find income and

support, have higher rates of unemployment, and often have not finished

high school (Review of Canadian Literature on Homelessness, 2003).

Furthermore, mental illness, addictions, and health challenges affect

homeless individuals' chances for success in education, income support,

and employment.

Ferguson, Spruijt-Metz, Miller, & Dyrness (1994) studied the

effectiveness of faith-based organizations in their work with the homeless.

Faith-based programs, were defined as those within a church or

congregational community, while faith-integrated programs were separate

from a denomination (Ferguson et al., 1994, p. 2). In the U.S., the Bush

administration has supported faith-based programs in recent years.

However, one consideration is the credibility in the design of research these

organizations conduct. These faith-based organizations, however flawed,

provided 20 billion in services that benefit over 70 million Americans annually (Ferguson et al., 1994, p. 3). Those services often deal with poverty and homelessness. Most of that funding was from private donors.

A consideration of this background, the literature on homelessness, service-learning, simulations, experiential learning and cognitive dissonance theory provided the basis for research into *One Homeless Night.*

Chapter Three

Method

Research Questions

The following research questions were explored in this study of *One*

Homeless Night:

RQ1: To what extent did *One Homeless Night* embody the experiential

learning model and theory and evidence service learning?

RQ2: To what extent did the media component enhance the

participants' learning experience through *One Homeless Night*?

RQ3: To what extent did participants in *One Homeless Night* gain a

greater understanding of the complexity of the causes, incidence, and

nature of homelessness?

RQ4: To what extent did participants in One *Homeless Night* acquire

increased empathy towards homeless people?

RQ5: To what extent did *One Homeless Night* cause participants to

identify, examine, and change previously held views of homeless

people and how to solve the problems associated with homelessness?

This study followed standard methods for qualitative and quantitative

research interviews with participants. A survey was administered to

participants prior to *One Homeless Night*. Interviews were conducted with

eight participants after the event in London, Ontario, on November 3, 2006.

The author participated in the event, and conducted informal and formal

interviews to gain an understanding of homelessness prior to the event. The

author also collected documents from the organizations and traveled across

Canada visiting the host organizations. Both a critical and a typical case

model were employed in examining the data. Gathering data under a *critical*

case sampling strategy allowed for "logical generalization and maximum

application to other cases" (Creswell, 2004, p. 127). The study of a single

One Homeless Night event provided the opportunity to understand other *One*

Homeless Night events. *One Homeless Night* is an example of a typical

critical case among other events across Canada. The interviewee's accounts

of the event allow for a *typical case* of the event to be examined in depth.

This can be applied to understand the general impact of the event that

occurred across Canada from 2005 to 2006 in 24 locations. A typical case

highlights what is normal or average (Creswell, 2004, p. 127). The study of a

typical case, and extrapolating the common norms provided for a

understanding of what the event could communicate. *One Homeless Night*

has a basic structure or format that is consistent among the events. It is

tailored to the specific demographics of each location, but the experience

itself is ultimately the same in a few main areas.

　　The region-specific variation in content and demographics allow for

participants to maximize learning in their community while still

experiencing *One Homeless Night.* As a result, it is reasonable to study one

typical event and know that it represents the basic structure and outcome

of the event in the other locations. The consistent elements of *One Homeless*

Night include a street walk, a facilitated event by a qualified outreach

worker, a service learning component, and an overnight experience. All components of *One Homeless Night* were designed to communicate what homelessness is, what the various factors are that cause homelessness, and to increase awareness of what work is being conducted in the community.

Media were utilized in the structure of *One Homeless Night* to provide a visual context for where the homeless live, and what homelessness is like. *One Homeless Night* utilized photos and video recorded interviews with current or formerly homeless individuals. This allowed participants to see and have a context for the rest of the event and what they were about to experience.

Informal Interviews and Pre-interviews

While visiting the organizations, the author built relationships with those who worked at the organizations, beginning in 2005. After extensive research on homelessness while in the role of producer for a week-long focus on homelessness, the author built a national database of organizations working full time with homelessness. As a part of the informal research, the author spent each Wednesday for a 3 month time period, traveling with the outreach van of a local men's shelter responsible for building consistent relationships with the homeless in Toronto. The role of these support workers, as the outreach component of a specific region of Toronto, was assigned on a government contract as part of an initiative called *Off the Streets, into Shelters.* In her work visiting various organizations and volunteering, the author had more than 25 filmed and/or

personal interviews with homeless and formerly homeless individuals. These extended further to interviews with frontline workers and the various directors of the organizations working with homelessness full time. On a national level, the author visited 16 organizations across Canada, seeing their facilities, meeting with directors, and dialoguing on the launch of *One Homeless Night.* The author also attended the *Street Level* conference in March 2006 where she was able to conduct the pilot study with frontline workers and also continue to build her national network of those who work directly with the homeless.

In 2005, the inaugural year, participant observation was employed in the two pilot events. The author participated in *One Homeless Night* during those two events as a group leader, allowing for non-invasive observation and participation. In addition, participation in the event provided insight into the debriefing time where questions and concerns were aired as people began to sort through the event and its purposes.

Finally, while participating in *One Homeless Night,* the author filmed interviews with participants immediately following the event, gathering their feedback and comments. These interviews and the footage were compiled to formulate nationally televised updates on homelessness in Canada.

A filmed and produced segment aired on a national Christian television show, called *100 Huntley Street,* which chronicled the changes in group members and the impact of *One Homeless Night.* Further, the extensive footage of two *One Homeless Night* pilots in 2005 and 2006

including interviews with participants provided video recorded

documentation of participant reactions, comments, and behavior.

Formal Approach for the Interviews: London, Ontario

Interviewing provided an opportunity to understand the complex

experience of *One Homeless Night* and its impact on participants. The

process of telling stories allows a progression of creating significance for

interviewees (Seidman, 2006). "When people tell stories, they select details

of their experience from their stream of consciousness" (Seidman, 2006, p.

7). Interviewing can provide an avenue to the background of people's

behavior. The significance that a participant attributes to an experience can

have an impact on how he/she goes through that experience. One benefit of

interviewing is that it allows a researcher to understand the described

behavior in a more in depth way than surveys or other data collection

methods (Seidman, 2006, p. 11).

A narrative approach proved most effective and viable for the

structure of the interviews for two reasons. First, the complexity of

gathering and administering surveys was logistically challenging as the

event was spread out across the nation. Interviews with one specific group

allowed for a more in depth understanding of a typical case. Secondly, as

homelessness is so diverse and complex, it is not simply understood in a

survey and interviewees often need to explain and clarify what they learned.

Interviewing allows for much needed detail and depth with an interviewee on

a complex subject and about the multifaceted experience of *One Homeless*

Night. As a method, interviewing begins by allowing a person to express his

or her ideas and tell stories in individual accounts (Creswell, 2004, p. 54).

The narrative approach can be understood to be a spoken or written

account of one particular event or a series of events that are linked

(Seidman, 2006). This can also include actions. In Creswell's definition, the

actions or events must be linked chronologically. Primarily, the interviews

gather an oral history of the event.

One *Homeless Night* had a logical chronological order, allowing for an

effective parameter for the interview questions. The group size of

participants from London was 28 and all 28 were asked to consider being

interviewed. The group's administrative assistant contacted participants.

Eight were self-selected and interviewed. Primary data was gathered

through those eight interviews with participants from *One Homeless Night*

after the event. The interviews lasted 15-35 minutes in duration, and most

averaged 25 minutes in London, Ontario, Canada. The sample included

students from the University of Western Ontario as well as community

members who participated as a group in *One Homeless Night.*

The interviews were semi-structured and primarily narrative, allowing

the participants to express what the event communicated to them. Names of

informants have been changed in this report to protect their anonymity. To

begin, the participants were asked to share the various events of the night

and expand upon what happened, their observations, etc., as they

remembered them. The interviews were conducted with a list of guiding

questions, but were primarily open-ended with the objective of discussing the experience of the event and what it communicated to the participant. As a basis for the interview, interviewees were asked to go over the events of the night and to discuss what happened at each point in the experience. Where clarification was needed, or it was deemed necessary, additional questions were asked to go further in depth. In particular, follow up calls were conducted to further inquire about the extent of media impact on the experience.

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and then analyzed in two stages with four steps. A read through first occurred, including listening again to the audio files from the interviews. This was followed by an additional read highlighting emerging themes. Thirdly, indicators of service learning were identified as outlined based on the Baker et al. (1997) model to ascertain whether service learning and experiential learning indeed took place through the event. Finally, outcomes of the learning experience as outlined in the research questions were identified.

Each recurring theme was identified in the transcripts and then labeled. Evidence of service learning was marked throughout participants' comments as well as in their description of the events. Finally, as answers to the research questions emerged, they were identified and labeled. This allowed for a clear interpretation of the analysis. Through the themes, an understanding of the experience emerged for the interviewer. One factor that aided in that understanding was prior participant observation at *One*

Homeless Night, allowing the interviewer to understand the context of the event the interviewees discussed.

Survey of Participants

While interviews and participant observation gathered an in depth understanding of a typical case, it still remained necessary to gather a larger snapshot of perceptions of homelessness across Canada prior to participation in *One Homeless Night.* A pilot study was conducted and 72 individuals were surveyed on their perceptions of homelessness before participation in *One Homeless Night.* In addition, a number of questions also sought to ascertain participants' prior exposure to media on homelessness.

Surveys were posted on a website before the event and distributed to group leaders to be administered. Group leaders of the participants printed and administered the survey or encouraged participants to fill out the survey online. Surveys were returned in email format as well as by mail. The survey (see Appendix A) was intended to test participants' perceptions on a Likert scale of homelessness on various common attitudes towards the homeless.

While data was available online, it was primarily administered in person. Respondents were asked to give the last four digits of their driver's license, student number, or phone number to anonymously identify themselves.

Gender was fairly balanced among respondents, with 44.3% male and 55.7% female. Primarily, the demographics were divided almost in thirds for

age. Over 34% of participants were between the ages of 17 and 21 years, 34% of participants were between the ages of 22 and 30 years, and 27% were between the ages of 46 and 60 years. No participants were below the age of 13 for safety reasons.

Just over 93% of respondents were single, 5% reported being married and 1.6% had been divorced. About 11% of respondents lived on their own, 49% still lived with their parents, and 38% lived with roommates.

The educational levels of respondents indicated that in the highest grade level achieved, 8% had completed only high school, 36% were currently in high school, 3% in an additional high school year, 31% in college or university, 2% had a college degree, 16% had a university degree, and 3% had completed post-graduate work. It is important to note that college and university are not interchangeable in Canada.

Chapter Four

Results

Through experiential learning, participants were able to learn about

homelessness; assess, change, and recognize biases towards the homeless;

learn about homelessness in their community; and grow in their

understanding of what is being done to solve the problems as well as what

is most effective. The first research question endeavored to find whether or

not the requirements for a service learning project were met. Although

service learning is also experiential learning, this question focused on

finding various components in *One Homeless Night* that taught the

participants to serve. Research question one sought to discover to what

extent the *One Homeless Night* event embodied the experiential learning

model and theory as well as evidenced service learning.

One Homeless Night provided service learning opportunities through

two main avenues. First, participants learned about homelessness,

providing an accurate basis on which to understand a service ethic. Then,

participants were given opportunities to serve the night of the event.

Specific service learning opportunities emerged within *One Homeless

Night.* The entire group served ice cream sundaes to the men in the drop-in

environment at the beginning of the night. In addition, the women were able

to clean the washrooms, help out with odd jobs, and make breakfast in the

Rotholme family shelter. While making ice cream sundaes, participants

served, but also sat and enjoyed learning from conversation: "We all went

and we sat down at different tables and talked to them about their lives. It was good, because I've never really had a chance just to talk to a homeless person" (Mike, personal communication, January 11, 2007). Another participant noted a similar benefit to the service component: "Serving ice cream and talking to the men at the men's shelter was really hands-on and good, but then seeing it was another component of the hands-on. So you're not just sitting in a lecture, you're like 'yeah it's a problem,' and 'these people need this and this,' but then you actually see it and it highlights it more" (Kim, personal communication, January 11, 2007). The service ethic, as communicated through the facilitator, and serving the homeless, was an important value that the facilitator portrayed and shared.

Evidence of all of the structural dimensions of the experiential learning process—*concrete experience, reflective observation, active experimentation, and abstract conceptualization*—emerged in the interview results.

These dimensions occurred as participants experienced the event, thought about what they said as they were experiencing it, served food, cleaned, and processed their current attitudes toward the homeless. The experience of listening to the facilitator, as well as to homeless or formerly homeless individuals, proved valuable in three ways. First, it allowed participants to open up conversational experiential learning, embodying both listening and speaking. Secondly, the environment was conducive to hearing what the facilitators know best, homelessness, and therefore

expanded the views of the participants. Thirdly, local facilitators who work

with homelessness at *One Homeless Night* were able to facilitate a complete

experiential learning process through discussion, providing service learning

opportunities, educating, and sharing.

Concrete Experience

All eight respondents reported concrete experiences throughout the

event that impacted their thinking and emotions. The main concrete

experiences reported were as follows: a tour of the men's shelter,

conversations with the homeless, a street walk, cleaning and cooking,

sleeping overnight on the floor, and a conversation with a youth at YAC, a

youth center.

The tour of the men's shelter and drop-in center provided an

opportunity to see how the processes work at the mission. "They showed us

where the drop-in center for people with mental illness was . . . they [the

mentally ill] don't have to go through the process of filling out hundreds of

questions" (Mike, personal communication, January 11, 2007). The

concrete experience of conversation was vital in providing insight into the

homeless. Another respondent learned from his conversation with a

homeless individual:

>   I was chatting with one guy who has a university degree, how he put a
>
>   lot of focus and attention on education, which is important. But it still
>
>   doesn't solve everything, and here's this young guy who has a
>
>   university degree and he's homeless, so again, I could be there

tomorrow if the circumstances are that way. (James, personal

communication, January 11, 2007)

Increased awareness of homelessness through these events provided

the framework for other steps in the experiential learning cycle.

Respondents remembered the walk providing an overview of the city and

resources available to the homeless, and reported "we went for the walk

around town. . . there's like 14 different mission services in London for

people that are homeless" (Mike, personal communication, January 11,

2007).

Later in the night after the walk, the groups split up, and the female

participants went to Rotholme Family Shelter. The male participants stayed

at the men's shelter. They reported a tour of the shelter and two more

concrete experiences: cleaning the washrooms in the morning and cooking

breakfast for the families.

The group was very tired at the end of the night and experienced

exhaustion in addition to having to sleep on mattresses on the floor

overnight. They felt that without the positive attitude of a familiar group, the

experience could have been very different. Through the exhaustion of seeing

unfamiliar places, imagining oneself to be homeless, lack of rest, and finally

sleeping in a shelter, the experience became real or concrete to participants.

In a small way, it was also a form of experimenting with how homelessness

affects people.

Active Experimentation

This experience of actively experimenting with homelessness occurred in two ways. All eight participants were involved in some form of service throughout the night. First, they had conversations with formerly homeless individuals. Secondly, the women also had an opportunity to clean and cook at the family shelter and to attempt to build relationships with the homeless. As participants extended themselves to the homeless and actively experimented with service learning, their ideas changed. Many of the service components created transformations: "Then we went and served the men their ice cream sundaes. We all went down and sat at different tables and talked to them [the homeless] about their lives" (Kim, Personal communication, January 11, 2007). Active experimentation was a chance for participants to utilize what they were learning and to process it through their involvement. They could process or cope with the concrete experience by doing something to incorporate this new knowledge. The active experimentation supplemented what they were learning by allowing them to overcome anxiety, initiate conversations, serve, and observe.

Reflective Observation

Reflective observation occurred as the participants observed the homeless, where they live on the streets, and what it is like to be homeless. They reflected in their conversations with fellow participants but also after the event. Reflective observation was evident in many of the situations during the event. These included the conversation when the participants

spoke with the men at the drop-in. They stated: "A lot of the people around us . . . there were people that had Ph.D.s, these aren't just people that had necessarily screwed up their lives. They fall on hard times, they might have lost their jobs, and they might have had a divorce. They're just normal human beings who fell on bad times" (Mike, personal communication, January 11, 2007).

Many of the female respondents cited their personal observations of the families in the shelter, noting their high level of education and poise and reflecting on how they were much higher class citizens prior to their arrival in Canada:

> But still, it was good to just sit and talk and realize that if you see someone who's homeless on the street, you shouldn't necessarily turn your eyes away. It's one of those awkward things, like when you see one of those people in a wheelchair, and you want to make them feel welcome but you don't want them to feel you're staring at them. When everyone turns his or her eyes away, it makes it even worse. It's kind of the same thing with homeless people. (Kim, personal communication, January 11, 2007)

An evaluation of current ideas and solutions occurred among many of the respondents, but a few in particular were able to reflect upon their changes in attitude and consideration of personal behavioral changes. One respondent stated that now, when she is going through her closet, her first thought is to bring the clothing to YAK [the youth center] and to think about

the other homeless youth in London. She stated that it has "definitely impacted the way that I look at how I'm spending my money and gave me an outlook to be much more thankful for what I have" (Gill, personal communication, January 11, 2007). This process was a direct reflection of the connection the participants felt with individuals.

Abstract Conceptualization

Comprehension of individuals' stories helped to reinforce this concept of care for others. One conversation at the drop-in resulted in the following story of a man. "When talking he was telling us how he loves soccer, and wanted to play soccer for his national team back home. He came here thinking he was going to have a better life, but now he just wants to go back home. It's so terrible here, and there's no one to support him. He has no family here. He doesn't have the passport or something, so he can't get back home" (Gill, personal communication, January 11, 2007).

Enhanced Learning through Media

The second research question asked to what extent the media component enhanced the participants' learning experience through *One Homeless Night.*

The survey indicated that 13% of participants had seen one hour of programming on homelessness aired on *100 Huntley Street.* Only 3% had seen one hour or more of the media. 78% had not yet seen the DVD on *One Homeless Night.* Sixteen percent had seen less than one hour, and 5% had seen more than one hour. Over 98% of respondents had seen some amount

of media. Fifty-one percent had seen at least one show or story and 30% had seen two or more while 15% had seen three stories or movies with homelessness or more.

Interview participants' recollection of the audio-visual media used in the introduction of the event varied drastically. In follow-up questions on media, of the five respondents reached, all five gave different responses regarding what they remembered from the content. However, some were able to report the various elements, including "Rants" by Dion Oxford, giving a strong two-minute rant on an issue pertaining to homelessness. Three remembered the video street tour given by Greg Paul, Director of Sanctuary Ministries of Toronto. One participant also reported that they viewed the short, concise video promo of the event *One Homeless Night.* Four out of the five agreed that the media component was a good basis for providing a context for the event, given the varied levels of understanding of *One Homeless Night,* as well as homelessness in general, prior to the event. One person said that it "was good to give people who had not had a chance to see anything about *One Homeless Night"* (Katie, personal communication, March 23, 2007).

Of the five respondents interviewed, all agreed that the media component was helpful, but only if supplementing an experiential event. Participants unanimously agreed that it could not be the sole educator for homelessness. They primarily reported that it provided an excellent *context* at the beginning of the event for what was to come. Secondly, four also

agreed that the media was imperative given the media-driven culture we live in. One respondent did not feel the media was helpful, but did not negate its use. When asked whether the media should be included as a component in future events, again, four out of five responded with a "yes." One respondent summarized this idea stating: "I think people definitely connect with that kind of media stuff because it's so much in our culture, instead of just having someone get up in front of them and talk to them. But then I think both elements would probably be best, like having some media elements to it but also having an element where there is actually someone there who works with the homeless in your community" (James, personal communication, March 23, 2007).

The participant went on to further explain the importance of the community worker who knows the local community and can connect the video to the situation in the particular community of the event, sharing how it applies and sharing local stories. Overall, the findings indicated that the media component is necessary and relevant to the culture. When the media component was included with a local, educated worker and an experiential learning event about homelessness, it could function in a complimentary way. By viewing the media at the beginning of the event, respondents agreed that the primary role of the media in this interplay was to provide a context for what was to come in *One Homeless Night*. Overall, it evened out the varying backgrounds on homelessness by showing where the homeless live, and sharing perspectives on homelessness.

Causes, Incidence, and Nature of Homelessness

Research question three sought to measure the extent to which participants in *One Homeless Night* gained a greater understanding of the complexity of the causes, incidence, and nature of homelessness.

Perceptions of homelessness prior to the event were measured through the survey. Mean scores and standard deviations for the 29 5-point Likert scale items in the survey are displayed in Table 1. A higher mean score indicates a greater degree of agreement with the statement.

Table 1

Perceptions of Homelessness

Perception	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
1. Most Canadians have a clear understanding of what causes homelessness	1.9	.9
2. Homelessness is less of a problem in Canada than other Western countries	2.7	1.06
3. Canada has fewer homeless people per-capita than the United States	3.1	.82
4. A homeless person is defined as a person who sleeps outside in the streets, alleys, under bridges Etc.	2.5	1.06
5. A person is homeless if he/she lives in a car or shelter	3.8	1.23
6. Most homeless people are unaware of the help available to them	3.1	1.22
7. By working, a homeless person can solve many of their own problems	2.6	1.02
8. Homelessness is a problem that is easy to solve	1.7	1.2
9. Laziness often contributes to homelessness	2.3	.96
10. People who are homeless are more likely to be abused now in their current condition than they were before they left home	3.0	1.17
11. Most homeless people in large cities originally come from that city	2.5	1.02

	Neff	
12. People who are homeless would have been safer if they had stayed home	2.2	.91
13. Homelessness is a much greater problem in large cities than in small cities or towns	3.3	.99
14. Homeless people would be able to improve their situation if given information about job training, healthcare, support, housing etc.	3.8	1.14
15. Homeless people are often being sexually and/or physically abused on the streets, alleys, parks, shelters, etc.	3.6	.9
16. Youth who end up homeless would have been safer if they had stayed at home	2.6	.8
17. Abuse is rarely the reason why youth run away from home	2.3	1.04
18. Individuals often become homeless after suffering physical and sexual abuse	3.7	1.09
19. If affordable housing was provided, most problems with homelessness would be solved	2.6	.87
20. The government needs to do more to reduce homelessness in Canada	4.3	1.27
21. Homelessness would not be reduced even if affordable housing was available	3.2	1.11
22. Job loss is one of the major factors leading to homelessness	3.4	1.14
23. The higher a person's education, the less likely they are to become homeless	3.3	.92
24. If given a job, the future of homeless people would be much better and many of their problems would be solved	3.0	1.25
25. Drug abuse is a major factor that causes homelessness	3.8	.84
26. Many homeless people have a mental illness	3.3	1.3
27. Homelessness is a result of poor choices	3.2	1.08
28. Homelessness tends to only affect people in lower income levels	2.7	1.14
29. Homelessness is more likely to affect people who do not have social support networks	3.7	.9

Almost one third of respondents, 15 of the 61, respondents had participated in *One Homeless Night* before. A t-test was applied to see if prior participation affected perceptions. There was a significantly greater

agreement with the statement 'if affordable housing was provided, most problems with homelessness would be solved" among people who had previously participated in the event (t [25.7] – 2.96, p= .007). This means that participants who had previously been at the event recognize the importance of housing. While housing does not solve all problems, it greatly reduces the stress on homeless people. If combined with the support they need in other areas, successful transition from the streets is more likely.

There was also a stronger level of agreement with the statement "many homeless people have a mental illness" among those who had not participated in the event before (t [25.65] = 2.4, p= .023). While it would have been predicted that after participation, people would understand this to be more relevant, many factors could have contributed to this difference. First, the number of respondents from last year was very small, and secondly, they might have a greater understanding of the complexity of homelessness and are less likely to strongly agree with statements.

Men in the sample were significantly more supportive of the statement "abuse is rarely the reason why youth run away from home" than were the women (t [59] = 2.0, p= .47). This is interesting because abuse is a much more significant contributor to run-away youth that is commonly understood. Youth run away from home as a result of abuse in a strong majority of cases.

All eight participants who were interviewed were able to cite examples of their increased understanding of the complex factors causing

homelessness. One participant stated: "there's many, many reasons why or how people become homeless. There's no one solution, there's no easy solution. It's very complex" (James, personal communication, January 11, 2007). Participants reported changed attitudes toward homelessness as a result of *One Homeless Night:*

> There was definitely a difference in my attitude to homeless people compared to people who've never met a homeless person. Like the way I was before, if my before self had talked to my after self, they wouldn't have been on the same page. And I was telling my roommates about it and they were like, 'Oh, that's cool,' but still they weren't inspired at all to change the situation. (Gill, personal communication, January 11, 2007)

All eight participants reported significant paradigm shifts pertaining to their previously held views toward homelessness.

For all eight participants, their understanding of the complex factors that cause homelessness increased through hearing the story of a homeless young person at YAC, a youth center. They reported realizing how the abuse in his life impacted him and how his addiction to crack at age 11 complicated his life drastically. They were able to identify how the abuse in his home, the poor economic situation, and the drug addiction of his mother had hindered the teen's ability to function.

Participants gained a greater understanding of the incidences of homelessness through the media component. They were able to see the

hidden places where the homeless live. When at the men's shelter, participants observed a varied audience of men, all of whom came from various backgrounds. Three commented on how they were fully unaware of the incidences of homelessness in the city of London, given it is such a wealthy city. One participant was shocked to find over 120 men in the shelter the night they served ice cream. She stated "This is crazy, how are they allowing this to happen? . . . People think London is made and is all good stuff. Like wow, my city" (Kim, personal communication, January 11, 2007).

Three participants commented on observing a conversation between one participant with a history degree from the University of Western Ontario and a homeless man with the same degree. This is an example of the increased awareness of the incidences of homelessness in the educated population as well. The participant who had the conversation stated: "I was chatting with one guy who had a university degree, how he put a lot of focus and attention on education, which is important. But it still doesn't solve everything, and here's this young guy who has a university degree and he's homeless, so again, I could be there tomorrow if circumstances are that way" (James, personal communication, January 11, 2007).

A greater understanding of the nature of homelessness, particularly the impact of daily life on the homeless emerged in all eight respondents. Through the guided tour of the various shelters and facilities, respondents commented on the processes and how they accommodated the complexity

and the unique nature of homelessness. For example, informants were able to empathize with the difficulty of filling out paperwork, given the additional consideration of mental illness. One participant noted: "they showed us where the drop-in center for people with mental illness was. That way, they don't have to go through the process of filling out hundreds of questions, like in depth questions on a survey, they can just drop in . . . it's just for the people who are the most mentally ill" (Mike, personal communication, January 11, 2007). In the session with the homeless teenager at YAC, participants began to understand the nature of homelessness in much greater depth. All eight reported this time to be significant: "He was just telling us about the challenges that they face. You know, getting mugged— he said that he's had his ID stolen four times—and how impossible it is to get housing or jobs or anything else like that if you don't have proper ID. I think he was probably the thing that impacted most of us the most. From everyone I talked to afterwards it was all just his story" (Gill, personal communication, January 11, 2007).

Increased Empathy

The extent to which participants in One *Homeless Night* acquired increased empathy toward homeless individuals was examined by research question four. All eight respondents cited the impact of hearing the homeless teenager communicate his personal story in person. For them, this personal interaction with the homeless fostered greater empathy for the homeless. In response to the story of the young person, one respondent

stated, "I just couldn't imagine somebody being so young and not having anyone care about them. It was crazy" (Gill, personal communication, January 11, 2007). She also mentioned how this related to her life: "I've always tried to be thankful for what I have, but it was just when you see these other youth that are the same age as my younger siblings and they're homeless or they've been homeless for six years, and I just can't imagine that. [The idea of] not having a family" (Gill, personal communication, January 11, 2007).

Mike felt a particular empathy for the homeless after learning that transitional support for housing the homeless is not appreciated. He felt that if the homeless person genuinely wanted to change, it was a tragic result to see how they were not supported when this effort was made: "It's horrible that they have a chance of starting out with new lives, and then they can't do it because nobody's supporting them" (Mike, personal communication, January 11, 2007). Recognizing the complex nature of support is just as significant as empathizing with how this connects personally with one's own family. That support is complex due to the many factors required to help one individual from housing to job training to emotional support, medical care, education and meeting social needs.

Overall I think it made me aware in thinking about homeless people. I can just go to school every day and go back to my nice dorm and go see my family at Christmas. I forget that there's this world that exists where people don't have a lot and they are

struggling day to day. So its made me more sensitive to that. Even when I see people on the street now I think I know more I may not know exactly their needs but I know more than I used to even how I can help in some way. I know they needed volunteers at the mission for their store and stuff. For the future I know that there are places where I can go to help out. (Hannah, personal communication, January 11, 2007)

The students were able to reflect on their own situation and see how their lives were different:

I felt frustrated, because when we were walking around late at night, I tried to imagine in my mind that this was for real: I was looking for places for shelter; I was thinking 'What if there weren't a shelter and I had to live out here?' It was like one of the coldest nights ever; and I was freezing cold, walking with them; and I thought 'What if I had to live out here? I'd feel overwhelmed, and I wouldn't know where to go if I were out here on the streets'. Even a lot of the people that we were just passing on the streets, around midnight or so: I just thought 'This is their life - and I'm just doing it for one night. I felt a sense of hopelessness, in some way. The cycle of these people's lives: they can't get out. They can't get enough money to get a place on their own, or there's not enough available government housing.' (Hannah, personal communication, January 11, 2007)

Changes in Previously Held Views

The final research question, research question five, sought to ascertain to what extent *One Homeless Night* causes participants to identify, examine, and change previously held views of homeless people and how to solve the problems associated with homelessness. Participants' reflections in the interviews provided rich evidence for the impact the event had on their thinking. They were able to cite and identify examples of how they observed homelessness, its complexity, and its causes throughout the experience. They recognized what the mission staff has been doing to help homeless individuals. What emerged was recognition of best practices and recognition of the rationale of the staff, indicating they were able to connect what was being described with an understanding of how this impacts the homeless. The mission has a smaller shelter, designed to accommodate the homeless who suffer severe mental illnesses and are not able to manage under the procedures of the standard shelter. As a result, they expressed appreciation for the smaller shelter, recognizing its role in helping the vulnerable.

Hearing the youth's story at YAC helped participants examine and change their previously held view regarding giving money to pan-handlers. Most identified their bias against giving money to pan-handlers and re-examined and even changed these views.

It definitely impacted my view of homeless people because I'd always been taught, 'Don't give them money because they're probably on drugs'. But when we asked the one homeless youth, 'should you give

money to homeless people?' He had said, 'It's better to give money to the people who are asking, than for them not to have any money and then turn to crime and hurt somebody for it.' When I told my family that I was like 'give them bus tickets and money or give them food!' and that kind of stuff. Don't just assume that they're on drugs and even if they are on drugs at least they're not hurting anyone else. So, it definitely impacted the way I viewed them and the situation. (Mike, personal communication, January 11, 2007)

Another common perception mentioned by seven of the eight respondents was the idea that all homeless people are homeless as a result drugs. The homeless are often considered a lower class. Respondents benefited from hearing that while many are on drugs, it is not okay to assume it is always the case. One respondent stated, "They told us, 'yes, a lot of these people are on drugs, but that doesn't make them less human than we are'" (Mike, personal communication, January 11, 2007). James noted his observation of the youth: "he was doing cocaine at the age of 11. I was like, 'Whoa, slow down.' That was when it hit me like a ton of bricks. That was the thing that stands out the most of it all. Of the whole night. Really asking yourself, 'How does that come about?' Yeah, that was like, the major like, point" (James, personal communication, January 11, 2007).

The need for supported housing, not simply the provision of it, is commonly under appreciated, and the respondents recognized their stereotypes with respect to this.

They were saying that a lot of people, even once they get homes, they

can't function in them, because they have no community supporting

them. You need social interaction and they don't get that. They don't

know how to have that once they've been homeless for so long. So I

was just thinking that's something that needs to be addressed. I don't

know if there'd be partnering that could happen with the churches or

something, but that definitely needs to be addressed. (Mike, personal

communication, January 11, 2007)

A greater appreciation was fostered through *One Homeless Night* in

support of the workers who are in direct contact with the homeless. "I

definitely think that the services are under funded and under staffed. I have

a lot of respect for the people that are running them, a lot more" (Gill,

personal communication January 11, 2007).   The impression she felt was

to see the leadership of the facilitator. She noted that:

just to see him leading us in prayer and to see what he has to put up

with. They've got fights there. It's not a nice place to be. It's right

besides the railroad tracks and stuff, so it's really not a nice location

for him to have to work everyday and he's there with a whole bunch of

people that don't want to be there. Just the fact that they keep going

is really inspiring. (Gill, personal communication, January 11, 2007)

When learning about what still needed to be done, participants were able to

observe the systems in place as well as gaps. "It highlighted the services

that are in place and kind of showed where it's lacking, and where there are

holes and it needs help. And it kind of also tried to indirectly run you through a day, like what a homeless person does in a day, and what activities they partake in, and where do they go, and where do they spend their time and stuff" (Kim, personal communication, January 11, 2007).

Participants drastically changed previously held views of the homeless, particularly with regard to presumed laziness of the homeless and true causes of homelessness. An example of the identification, examination, and desire to make changes was expressed in a discussion on refugees.

> There was a family from, I think, Afghanistan or Pakistan or something, who were staying at the family shelter. And maybe it was one of the leaders there who told us that the two parents were doctors or something before they left their country. I think they were refugees, and they had come to Canada, and they didn't have anything. And so they have all these skills and stuff and they just don't have the opportunities here, since they're in a different country. And they had three kids and a young baby, and it was just shocking - like 'Wow! You can have so much somewhere else, but if something changes in your country and you have to leave, and you come to a different country' - I was just really touched by that story, and was wondering what else our government or city could do for them. (Hannah, personal communication, January 11, 2007)

The main components that contributed to the desire to help were the conversations they had with homeless individuals. One respondent explained, "it was really good talking with him and I think I just got a different perspective of how you view people on the streets. I kind of think, 'Well they should have been working harder.' I'm very judgmental I think. I didn't realize that until I was actually at the mission and I had to wrestle with my internal thoughts and how I previously thought about them" (Hannah, personal communication, January 11, 2007).

Another respondent expressed the same change in her perspective: "So he needed money and I guess it made me rethink that too. I don't want to just walk past, but I don't want to give them money either if they're going to spend it on something else. It just got me thinking about that issue more. It was specifically addressed" (Hannah, personal communication, January 11, 2007).

Participants began to recognize their previous views that homeless people are simply lazy, might not be true.

I think the other thing was a lot of times when youth are on the street I always thought it was their fault that they were just rebellious and had run away from home or something. I think I was just very judgmental. I didn't realize that sometimes your home situation is so bad that you can't live at home. I guess I just look at my own family like I've been so blessed; I can't even comprehend how good I've had it. I guess there's just a lot of stuff you don't see and it's good to be

exposed to when it's in your own city. I think that was the biggest

thing that I found personally. (Kim, personal communication, January

11, 2007)

Another student noted, "I started thinking about how I could maybe change

the way I'm living my life to help in some way, whether it was volunteering

or - I guess, for me, they just don't have many opportunities even just to -

like how they fill their days, what to do" (Hannah, personal communication,

January 11, 2007).

A greater appreciation was fostered through *One Homeless Night* in

support of the workers who are in direct contact with the homeless.

Participants were excited to learn and see what is being done. "It was very

insightful, to know the numbers involved and even the reasons why they're

there, why they're not at home, why they can't be at home. But just seeing

the Youth Action Center, the things they provide for the youth that are

coming in, was very encouraging; knowing that they're not just being left on

their own (James, personal communication, January 11, 2007). Through

conversations with the facilitator, who hosted the event, participants began

to recognize the need and to see what they could do to help. The

appreciation for the work happened as they saw and heard about the quality

work employed in working with the homeless. In addition, another

respondent noted,

I really liked what they have at the center there with facilities where

they can make their own meals and they have food brought in. Also

they just have a place where you can have a shower if you need to go to school and you've been on the street and you just want to have a shower. I really liked that they have that. Even the job training and stuff I thought was really good for people who wanted to finish high school and have job opportunities and resume building sessions and counseling. I thought that was really good. I think that that was probably my favorite thing on the stop talking with them. I think that was mostly the tour. (Hannah, personal communication, January 11, 2007)

Overall, participants' perceptions of the homeless, particularly in relation to the true causes and victims of homelessness were changed. An overall greater awareness of homelessness and appreciation for the work that other do emerged. Participants' ability to identify major factors contributing to homelessness after the event was much higher than they might have before the event.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how Canadians perceive homelessness. Focusing on *One Homeless Night*, an experiential learning event, the study endeavored to explore what participants learned about homelessness as a result of the event. The survey results indicated that peoples' perceptions of the homeless prior to *One Homeless Night* were inaccurate in many ways pertaining to the nature of homelessness. As a result, follow-up interviews provided an understanding of the increased knowledge, empathy, and awareness of participants after *One Homeless Night.* For future research, interviews are recommended as they provide a more in-depth understanding of participants' learning. This method also allows for probing into areas needing clarification.

While literature was reviewed from the United States, Canada, and in part from the U.K., the event itself occurred in Canada and thus, frequent references to Canada emerged. This does not limit the events' potential to Canada, but rather provides a model to be replicated internationally in developed nations. Many of the principles and best practices can easily be transferred. This study sought to provide a basis for understanding the positive impact of experiential and service learning on education pertaining to the homeless. The nature of experiential learning provided a unique and

necessary platform for participants of the event to explore, question, reflect upon, and face their views of homelessness.

This study also sought to fill a research gap that exists in Canada pertaining directly to groups' participation in an awareness event through evangelical Christian organizations. *One Homeless Night* is a program sponsored and developed conceptually by Crossroads Missions in conjunction with organizations that facilitate the event and is continuing on an annual basis. Each year, it provides an opportunity for individuals to play the role of a homeless person for a night by participating in a street walk, staying overnight in a temporary shelter, and actively interacting with homeless individuals. This model of experiential learning draws upon years of experience from the facilitators, who are often the frontline street workers. Frontline street workers have the best knowledge of homelessness and utilize the best practices as they work with the homeless every day.

Beginning with Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model, experiential learning has been cited as an effective way for people to learn and retain what they have learned. Experiential Learning Theory has served as the basis for effective education and learning that is engaged, processed, and applied. This is intended to supplement a concept that is heard with an opportunity to learn in a much deeper, more applicable way. *One Homeless Night* successfully incorporated the experiential learning model into teaching participants about homelessness. Through experiential learning, participants were able to learn about homelessness; assess, change, and

recognize biases towards the homeless; learn about homelessness in their community; and grow in their understanding of what is being done to solve the problems and what is most effective. The experience of listening to the facilitator, as well as to homeless or formerly homeless individuals, proved valuable in three ways. First, it allowed participants to open up conversational experiential learning, embodying both listening and speaking. Secondly, the environment was conducive to hearing what the facilitators know best, homelessness, and therefore expanded the views of the participants. Thirdly, individuals who work with homelessness, at *One Homeless Night*, were able to facilitate a complete experiential learning process through discussion, providing service learning opportunities, educating, and sharing.

The experiential learning model was fully employed in *One Homeless Night*. All eight respondents reported concrete experiences throughout the event that impacted their thinking and emotions. The main concrete experiences reported were a tour of the men's shelter, conversations with the homeless, a street walk, cleaning and cooking, sleeping overnight on the floor, and a conversation with a youth at YAC, a youth center. Reflective observation occurred as the participants watched the homeless, where they live on the streets, and what it is like to be homeless. They reflected in their conversations with fellow participants but also after the event. Reflective observation was evident in many of the situations during the event.

Rezak (1999) confirmed the power of a process whereby experience and thought unite. The experience of learning about the homeless and also thinking through one's beliefs allowed *One Homeless Night* to effectively allow participants to process their views toward the homeless. According to Kolb (1984), "the experiential learning model pursues a framework for examining and strengthening the critical linkages among education, work, and personal development" (p. 4). Learners are able to form new significance through common experiences and conversation. *One Homeless Night* provides opportunities for participants to share the experience of the event while engaging with the homeless and also participating in a similar situation that the homeless might encounter. Conversations with the homeless, formerly homeless, and the workers at the event contribute to this learning. "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it" (Kolb, 1984, p. 42). A combination of understanding a concept and transformation of it are necessary for learning to occur (Kolb, 1984). Transformations occurred in *One Homeless Night* when previously held views were challenged.

At the conclusion of the event, participants were debriefed, which according to Baker et al. (1997), is another imperative element of an experiential learning event.

Often associated with experiential learning, service learning has similarities in the application of classroom concepts or concepts in general

to real-life situations. Anderson and Sungur (1999) defined service learning as "an active learning experience associated with a community service application" (p. 132). Service learning applies concepts through practical experience and application that have a direct relation to the learning objective. Both service learning and experiential learning are increasingly becoming respected and effective forms of teaching, including at the high academic levels. "Credibility is one of the common denominators of success at influencing others" (Hogan, 2005, p. 57), and when facilitators have credibility, they have made the first step toward reaching someone. As reflection on an experience increases, the experience itself begins to grow in importance to the participant and also in positive outcomes.

Service learning is occasionally linked to social advocacy, internships, volunteerism, and citizenship training (Karlberg, 2005). He proposed that service learning should focus on fostering a "service ethic" rather than just serving. The goal would ultimately be to foster a true ethic of care for the well being of others that does not focus on the individual learning. Closer to the original value of service learning, community service learning provides opportunities for students to learn how to research, but more importantly to grow as citizens. Koulish (1998) noted that after learning how to research and gain knowledge, students were able to learn how to solve problems, lead, build team, and learn as they worked with immigrants. Immigrants are often temporarily homeless as well as marginalized and can be a particularly fragile population. Working with vulnerable people and seeing our personal

connection to them allowed homeless people to truly understand the need for them to care and not assume that the homeless are completely to blame for their situations. *One Homeless Night* strove to communicate this ethic.

This study also explored whether the use of media enhances the experiential learning process. The use of televised national programming was incorporated into the ongoing production of educational materials. A DVD was produced recently with interviews from former or current homeless individuals and as well as with individuals who work with the homeless.

Respondents agreed that the media component was helpful, but only if supplementing an experiential event. Participants unanimously agreed that it could not be the sole educator for homelessness. They primarily reported that it provided an excellent *context* at the beginning of the event for what was to come. Secondly, they also agreed that the media was imperative given the media driven culture we live in. Only one respondent did not feel the media was helpful, but did not negate its use.

All eight participants who were interviewed were able to cite examples of their increased understanding of the complex factors causing homelessness. All participants reported significant paradigm shifts pertaining to their previously held views toward homelessness. Three participants commented on observing a conversation between one participant with a history degree from the University of Western Ontario, and a homeless man with the same degree. This is an example of the

increased awareness of the incidences of homelessness in the educated

population as well.

A greater understanding of the nature of homelessness, particularly

the impact of daily life on the homeless, emerged in all eight respondents.

Through the guided tour of the various shelters and facilities, respondents

commented on the processes and how they accommodated the complexity

and the unique nature of homelessness. All eight respondents cited the

impact of hearing the homeless teenager communicate his personal story in

person. For them, this personal interaction fostered greater empathy for the

homeless.

Participants' reflections in the interviews provided rich evidence for

the impact the event had on their thinking. They were able to cite and

identify examples of how they observed homelessness, its complexity, and

its causes throughout the experience. They recognized what the mission

staff has been doing to help homeless individuals. What emerged was

recognition of best practices and recognition of the rationale of the staff,

indicating they were able to connect what was being described with an

understanding of how this impacts the homeless. A greater appreciation was

fostered through *One Homeless Night* in support of the workers who are in

direct contact with the homeless.

Participants also drastically changed previously held views of the

homeless, particularly with regard to presumed laziness of the homeless

and true causes of homelessness. Many of the female respondents cited

their personal observations of the families in the shelter, noting their high level of education and poise and reflecting on how they were much higher class citizens prior to their arrival in Canada. Many of the respondents informally evaluated current ideas and solutions regarding homelessness. A few, in particular were able to reflect upon their changes in attitude and consideration of personal behavioral changes.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory (CDT) provided a useful framework for examining the contradictions that students sometimes experience, when theory is tested against reality, as they are participating in service learning and experiential learning. Festinger (1957) outlined cognitions, or pieces of knowledge, which humans are constantly processing. Many cognitions are interacting and occurring simultaneously; however, the majority are unrelated. Some that are related and also conflicting are considered to be in cognitive dissonance, which can be understood as the psychological conflict between two cognitions about the same thing. This results in the need for a person to resolve the cognitive dissonance. They can add cognitions, change cognitions, or alter their importance. If two cognitions are significantly conflicting, the addition of another cognition can reduce the degree of dissonance. If two cognitions disagree, another option is to alter one cognition to agree with the other. Finally, alteration of the importance of one or more cognitions helps to prioritize the importance of one over the other.

One Homeless Night produced the conflicts among participants whereby they examined previously held beliefs about homelessness. Their

cognitions were often challenged. The entire experience combined debriefing time with new knowledge about the nature and complexity of homelessness. Participants articulated added cognitions, altered cognitions, and changed cognitions on issues relating to the causes of homelessness, their work ethic, empathy, and their need to care for the homeless. The importance of community service and social awareness applies to many fields which are related to homelessness.

Perceptions about poverty and homelessness are often related. Americans have been found to have ideological inconsistencies in their beliefs about poverty. Nilson (1981) found that poverty was an abstract concept unrelated to them personally. In social networks, if supporting the poor was reinforced, this contributed to increased awareness about poverty. As a result when directly facing homelessness and seeing a personal connection, participants could recognize these inconsistencies.

Furnham (1996) suggested that lay theories explaining the causes of poverty and the causes of homelessness are related. Attitudes toward welfare were linked to attitudes towards the causes and solutions to poverty. He argued that if ideologies about work ethic could be changed, so would perceptions of homelessness. *One Homeless Night* allowed groups in similar social networks whether educational, church related, or simply social to explore this and change their beliefs as a whole. This in turn created a culture of caring and support toward the homeless. It also fostered a sense of responsibility to care and do something.

Part of this change can hopefully lead to continued use of the *One Homeless Night* program and others like it. Furnham (1996) noted there are implications for those who desired to create educational approaches for social change. He noted that the success of programs depend upon the careful incorporation of an understanding of the social needs of those helping as well as those being helped.

In conclusion, Link et al. (1995) found strong evidence to support the idea that the public is concerned about homelessness, does not see it as desirable, and that there are many ideas of what the best solutions are. Link et al. (1995) argued that policy makers have a strong opportunity to create policy that is both effective and in line with public opinion. *One Homeless Night* proved there was enough concern among participants to attend the event and a willingness to face potentially incorrect beliefs about homelessness.

One goal of this research is to bring forth information that effectively changes policies as they are currently. The *Toronto Report Card on Homelessness* 2000 "highlights the urgent need for government action. The focus is on long-term strategies to reduce the current homeless crisis, and more importantly, to prevent more people from becoming homeless" (p. 1). Further research needs to focus on expanding research on an ongoing basis on *One Homeless Night* and also continued expansion of *One Homeless Night* into educational programs, university courses, corporate environments, and group settings.

Many educational institutions have incorporated experiential learning components into their courses. The importance of community service and social awareness applies to many fields and as a result, *One Homeless Night* has the potential to apply to the lives of many across disciplines. This event can link communities with relevant and credible organizations and provide effective, safe education regarding homelessness.

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Appendix A

One Homeless Night Survey

Welcome,

You are invited to play a vital role in understanding participants' experience in *One Homeless Night*. This survey is for academic purposes and is being conducted by Sarah Neff, an M.A. candidate in the School of Communication at Liberty University.

Completing this anonymous survey constitutes your consent to participate. You may withdraw such consent at any time simply by not returning it.

You will remain anonymous. For comparison purposes only, please provide the last seven digits of your phone number, your driver's license number, license plate number, or another number you will be able to remember:_____

Date of survey completion_____

For the following statements, please clearly mark or circle the number that best represents your personal view.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree Somewhat
3. Unsure
4. Agree Somewhat
5. Strongly Agree

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	Most Canadians have a clear understanding of what causes homelessness.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	Homelessness is less of a problem in Canada than in other Western countries.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	Canada has fewer homeless people per-capita than the United States.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	A homeless person is defined as a person who sleeps outside, in the streets, alleys, under bridges etc.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	A person is homeless if he/she lives in a car or shelter.

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Most homeless people are unaware of the help available to them. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | By working, homeless people can solve many of their own problems. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Homelessness is a problem that is easy to solve. |

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree Somewhat
3. Unsure
4. Agree Somewhat
5. Strongly Agree

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Laziness often contributes to homelessness. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | People who are homeless are more likely to be abused now in their current condition than they were before they left home. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Most homeless people in large cities originally come from that city. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | People who are homeless would have been safer if they had stayed home. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Homelessness is a much greater problem in large cities than in small cities or towns. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Homeless people would be able to improve their situation if given information about job training, healthcare, support, housing etc. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Homeless people are often being sexually and/or physically abused on the streets, alleys, parks, shelters, etc. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Youth who end up homeless would have been safer if they had stayed at home. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Abuse is rarely the reason why youth run away from home. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Individuals often become homeless after suffering physical and sexual abuse. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | If affordable housing was provided, most problems with homelessness would be solved. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | The government needs to do more to reduce homelessness in Canada. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Homelessness would not be reduced even if affordable housing was available. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Job loss is one of the major factors leading to homelessness. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | The higher a person's education, the less likely they are to become homeless. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | If given a job, the future of homeless people would be much better and many of their problems would be solved. |

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree Somewhat
3. Unsure
4. Agree Somewhat
5. Strongly Agree

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Drug abuse is a major factor that causes homelessness. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Many homeless people have a mental illness. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Homelessness is often a result of poor choices. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Homelessness tends to only affect people in lower income levels. |

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | Homelessness is more likely to affect people who do not have social support networks. |

How much televised programming on *100 Huntley Street* about homelessness in Canada have you watched?

☐   None

☐   Less than one hour

☐   Two hours or more

☐   An entire week

☐   More than one week

Have you watched any DVD about *"One Homeless Night"?*

☐   No

☐   Yes, less than one hour

☐   Yes, one hour or more

What other television programs, media (including movies), Internet, or educational materials featuring homeless people have you read or watched?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Have you already participated in *One Homeless Night*?

☐   No, not yet

☐   Yes

If "yes" where? _____and when? _____

You are almost done, just a few more questions. All information is highly confidential; please fill out the information below so we can get a better understanding of you.

Religious preference-Please choose one that best describes you:

☐ Active Christian/ Attend church

☐ I would consider myself to have Christian values but do not attend church and am not active in any Christian community

☐ Atheist/agnostic

☐ Other_____

Marital status-Please indicate:

☐ Single   ☐   Married☐   Divorc☐   Other_____

Please indicate what best describes your current situation:

☐ Homeowner/Rent my own place
☐ Live with parents
☐ Live with roommates

How old are you?

☐ 1-13 years   ☐   14-16 years

☐ 17-21 years   ☐   22-30 years

☐ 31-45 years   ☐   46-60 years

☐ 61+

Income-What is your annual income?

☐ Below 500$ a year
☐ 501-6000$ a year
☐ 6001-20,000$ a year
☐ 20,001-40,000$ a year
☐ 40,001-65,000$ a year
☐ 65,001$+

Please indicate the highest level of education you have:

☐ Elementary

☐ Completed High School

☐ Currently in High school (please circle what year you are in)
  Grade 9
  Grade 10
  Grade 11
  Grade 12

☐ Further Year

☐ Currently in College/University

☐ College Degree

☐ University Degree

☐ Post Graduate

Please indicate your gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. Your feedback is very important.

Appendix B

Involvement of Sarah Neff with homelessness

o *2004-2005 HIV/AIDS Educato*r, Lusaka Zambia with Street Boys. Canadian International Development (CIDA) Youth Internship. Crossroads Missions, 100 Huntley Street

o *2005 Producer and Project Coordinator*: "Homeless at Home". Week-long national television focus on homelessness, 100 Huntley Street in partnership with Crossroads Missions.

o *2005 Project Coordinator*, launch One Homeless Night, an awareness event designed to raise money and awareness regarding homelessness in Canada.

o *2006 research focus group-Street Level Conference, Ottawa.* 10 Frontline street workers were asked questions regarding best communication practices with homeless individuals when helping them transition from homelessness.

o *2006 Producer, homeless updates*, One Homeless Night segments, 100 Huntley Street

o *2006 Project Coordinator*, national launch of *One Homeless Night.*

o *2006 Producer,* website www.onehomelessnight.com

o *2006 traveled across Canada* to Vancouver, Lethbridge, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, London, Hamilton, Montreal, Ottawa, Halifax and Moncton interviewing organizational leaders and launching One Homeless Night.